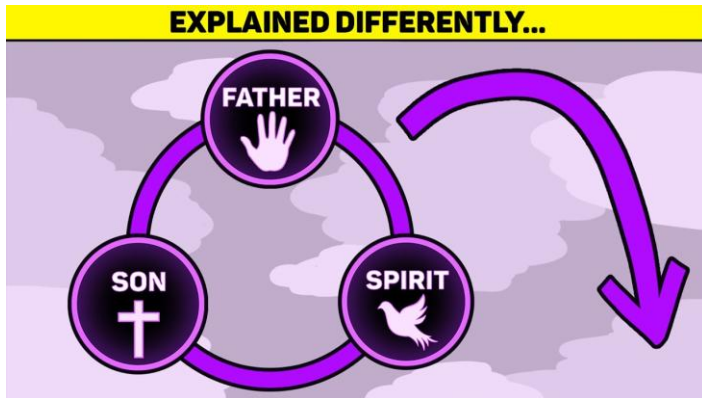


Trinity Sunday
May 31, 2026

Matthew 28:16-20



There is a story in Robert Caro's book *The Passage of Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, where Caro recounts that when a friend warned Lyndon Johnson not to trade in the Senate majority leader's power for the vice presidency because he'd have no power there, Johnson replied, "Power is where power goes." I like to imagine LBJ saying that with his deep Texas accent and swagger. Johnson believed that, as he held power as the Senate majority leader, he would carry that power into the vice presidency. The office would become powerful because he was.

On this Trinity Sunday, Matthew 28:16-20 has something to say about the power by which the church will do its work of making disciples of all nations.

Matthew's Gospel was written after the chaos of the Jewish Revolt and the destruction of the Temple had passed. For the author of Matthew's Gospel, the concern of his narrative now lies in the future of the church and what it will need for its mission and ministry. The gospel, compared to Mark's gospel, is expanded with more of Jesus' teachings, his birth narrative, and a longer discourse in Galilee after the resurrection. It is this discourse in Galilee from which our passage today comes.

We are told in the passage that the 11 disciples meet with Jesus on the mountain and worship him there. But some doubted. Who can blame them? It seems deeply human and understandable to have doubts after all that has occurred.

But perhaps the more interesting thing to note is that, despite their doubts, Jesus commissions them. He tells them that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him; surely the resurrection is proof of that! As he has all authority, he commissions them **to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit**, and teaching them everything he has commanded.

If they doubted before, I imagine many disciples are doubting now. After all, they have been with Jesus as he has taught and preached, cared for and fed people. They have seen Jesus run afoul of the religious leaders again and again. They know, deeply, that the work Jesus describes in some way got him killed and might very well get them killed. How do they do this risky and difficult work of making disciples?

The answer is the word that Jesus leaves with them. They are able to do these things because he will be with them, even to the end of the age.

It is Jesus 'presence in the waters of baptism and in the work of the Spirit that will enable us all to do this work. The one who has all authority has shared it with us. The one who has all power has promised to be with us. The one who conquered death and rose from the grave has promised never to leave us. We are empowered for this work because Christ is with us and empowers us.

This Trinity Sunday, let us remember that the one who has all power has given us all that we need to make disciples. It is not some outside power gained or wielded by power or force. It is the power given to us by the triune God in our very baptisms. The power is within us. Power is where power goes, indeed.

Questions for reflection on Matthew 28:16-20



1. On the mountain, the disciples worshiped Jesus. But the text tells us that some doubted. **Is this** an encouraging model for our worshiping communities or an indictment of the disciples?
2. What does making disciples of all nations mean to you? How do you live this out in your life and community?
3. How have you learned the things Jesus commanded us to do? Have you taught them to others?